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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/21/2016
TAGS: [PINR](#) [BU](#)
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFO ON BULGARIAN ARMY
BRIBERY SCANDAL (C-RE6-01741)

REF: STATE 186033 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA Alex Karagiannis, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) Post provides the following answers in response to reftel questions:

- Are the bribery charges against LTC Lyutskanov an isolated case of wrongdoing or part of a broader pattern of bribery and corruption within the Bulgarian Armed Forces?

Based on prior experience, open-source information and inquiries with the MoD, Post believes that the bribery allegations against Lyutskanov are not indicative of a broader pattern of bribery and corruption within the General Staff. There have been credible, unrelated allegations of bribery against civilian elements of the MoD, particularly with regard to defense procurement.

- Is there evidence that Lyutskanov's superiors were aware that he was taking bribes and looked the other way, prior to his arrest in September?

We are unaware of any such evidence. We believe it is possible that Lyutskanov had one or more accomplices in his bribery ring, though he may have been the ranking officer involved. In the wake of the scandal, personnel procedures have been changed to prevent similar malfeasance from happening again.

- To what extent may the bribery scandal affect discussions of appropriations for the military in the coming fiscal years?

The Lyutskanov scandal has had no perceivable effect on the government's recent defense budget, and is unlikely to affect military appropriations in coming years.

- To what extent has the arrest of Lyutskanov and subsequent revelations of the bribery charges affected the standing and reputation of the Bulgarian Army with the public?

There has been no perceivable change in the public standing of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, which remain widely respected.

- Does it appear that the Lyutskanov scandal has run its course in the media, or is the public discussion likely to continue?

The scandal has run its course for now, although further coverage is likely if additional details of the investigation are made public.

12. (U) POC is PolMil Officer John Senior

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KARAGIANNIS